

# Vision Zero Update to Commission on People with Disabilities. Wednesday, December 9, 2020.

The following document is an update to the Commission on People with Disabilities regarding projects and campaigns related to the County's Vision Zero programs. For a complete list of projects and campaigns related to the 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan, visit [the Vision Zero webpage](#) or [the M-C-D-O-T Project Page](#).

## 1 ON-GOING PLANNING EFFORTS.

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### 1.1 VISUALLY IMPAIRED NAVIGATION STUDY.

**What is it?** The County Department of Transportation applied for and received a grant from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to examine traveling in our urban areas and transit accessibility for people with low or no vision. The study will examine existing conditions, stakeholder feedback, and leading practices to make recommendations on improving the pedestrian environment.

**Current Status.** Work is starting this month. The County intends to have its first stakeholder meeting in January and invites members of the Commission to attend. The first meeting will be before the next Commission meeting on January 13. That will allow County staff to attend the January 13 Commission meeting to give the Commission an update and to hear any feedback from Commission members who attended the meeting.

**How will this help with accessibility?** This study was commissioned based on concerns about accessibility with new infrastructure and transit options in our urban areas. The study will make recommendations to ensure navigation for people with no or low vision is not compromised as the County builds out its master planned cycling and transit network.

While this study is underway, M-C-D-O-T is committed to continue partnering with the Commission and other organizations representing people with disabilities to get their feedback on potential new projects and treatments. Below are photos from field visits hosted by H-H-S and M-C-D-O-T with residents with low and no vision to get feedback on physical detection devices that are currently on the market, but not yet deployed in Montgomery County.

**More Details.** [Link to Press Release Announcing Study.](#)



## 1.2 VISION ZERO STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN.

**What is it?** The current Vision Zero Action Plan requires the County to develop a long-term strategic plan that will guide the County towards eliminating serious and fatal injuries from our roadways.

**Current Status.** Public feedback was collected this summer and fall to determine issues and programs that were important to residents. This fall and winter, workgroups of city, county, and state staff are constructing the first draft of the plan. In winter and spring 2021, an additional round of public feedback will be held to get resident opinions on the draft. The plan will be finalized in June 2021 so that it can be implemented at the start of Fiscal Year 2022.

**How will this help with accessibility?** The new Action Plan will have a series of action items focused on improving the safety of all road users, whether through design and engineering of our roads and sidewalks or through use of enforcement and education campaigns.

**More Details.** [Vision Zero 2030 Plan Website.](#)

### 1.3 COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDE.

**What is it?** A core piece of the Vision Zero Action Plan was to update the street, sidewalk, and bike path designs for all roadways in the County to prioritize safety for all users, environmental and economic sustainability, and create streets that are great, dynamic places. The guide provides policy and design guidance on the planning, design, and operation of county roadways and will be used in the following situations:

- When designing future streets or reconstructed streets in an area experiencing redevelopment,
- When implementing a capital improvement project, such as the construction or reconstruction of a street, intersection, or bridge, and
- When resurfacing a street or conducting major work in the street, which may create an opportunity to reconsider some aspects of the street’s design.

**Current Status.** A draft was released this summer and reviewed by the Planning Board in the fall. It is likely to go before the County Council in January for final review before the guide is implemented. Both Planning and M-C-D-O-T imagine this guide as a “living document” where it can be updated more frequently compared to other master planned documents.

**How will this help with accessibility?** The Complete Streets Design Guide was created to ensure that safety for all users is prioritized when designing or redesigning a street. As roadways are changed either through private development or County Government projects, the guide lays out expanded sidewalk clear zones free of permanent and temporary obstructions and separated bicycle facilities to keep bikes and e-scooters out of car traffic and off the sidewalk.

**More Details.** [Complete Streets Website.](#)

### 1.4 PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN.

**What is it?** The Vision Zero Action Plan called for the creation of a Pedestrian Master Plan and currently under development by the Planning Department. The plan will make walking and rolling safer, more comfortable, more convenient, and more accessible for pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all parts of the county. In addition to prioritizing needed infrastructure, the plan will recommend new and amended policies and operational practices, design standards and programming to support walking and rolling.

**Current Status.** The Planning Department is collecting data on all roadways to calculate the [Pedestrian Level of Comfort](#) Countywide. These data will aid the Planning Department in making its prioritization recommendations. The Pedestrian Master Plan will go before the Planning Board next fall with a goal of final approval by County Council by the end of 2022.

**How will this help with accessibility?** The Pedestrian Master Plan’s scope goes beyond the safety impacts of walking and rolling in our county and looks at the comfort, convenience, and access that make up the pedestrian experience in the County. The plan will identify and recommend policies,

practices, design standards, and programming that will make it easier and preferable to be a pedestrian in Montgomery County.

**More Details.** [Pedestrian Master Plan Website.](#)

### 1.5 COUNTY GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY (FORMERLY SUBDIVISION STAGING POLICY).

**What is it?** Every four years, the County Council must update the Subdivision Staging Policy. As part of the update this year, it has been renamed the County Growth and Infrastructure Policy to clarify what this policy does. The intent of the Growth and Infrastructure Policy is to ensure public facilities, particularly schools and transportation infrastructure, are adequate to accommodate new development. This year's update provided an enhanced focus on schools in relation to growth and development in Montgomery County. The transportation side of the policy evaluated transportation policy areas and updated multimodal infrastructure adequacy tests with a new focus on Vision Zero safety priorities.

**Current Status.** The new policy has been adopted by the County Council and will be in place through 2024.

**How will this help with accessibility?** The updated policy incorporates Vision Zero principles by requiring a Vision Zero Statement for all projects that will generate 50 or more peak-hour person trips and updates the developer requirements for developer-funded bikeways, sidewalk, and bus shelters to be more robust. This will ensure new developments will add to a better pedestrian environment for all users and elevates safety more than previous policies had before.

**More Details.** [Growth and Infrastructure Policy Website.](#)

## 2 TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PROJECTS.

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### 2.1 DEDICATED ON-STREET SCOOTER AND BIKE PARKING.

As part of the County's goal to keep sidewalks clear, M-C-D-O-T has piloted on-street parking corrals for bikes and e-scooters in Downtown Silver Spring. Both are on Fenton Street near Whole Foods and Safeway. The County has contacted e-scooter vendors letting them know that bike racks and corrals are preferred locations to place recently charged devices to help keep them from obstructing the sidewalk.



### 2.2 PROTECTED CROSSINGS.

The Vision Zero Action Plan calls for additional protected crossings with either a full traffic signal or a pedestrian beacon to create more safe places for pedestrians and cyclists to cross. All new signals have pedestrian countdown timers, audible pedestrian signals, and are timed for crossing at 3.5 feet per second. The County will add additional crossing time if the context is appropriate. So far in 2020, the

County D-O-T and State Highway Administration have installed 3 traffic signals and 10 pedestrian beacons and scheduled 6 signals and 14 beacons for installation.

There are different types of pedestrian beacons installed depending on the context of the road and land use. Below are images of each type of device.

The HAWK beacon, also known as a pedestrian hybrid beacon, stays dark until activated by a pedestrian. When activated, the HAWK beacon brings up a yellow light to alert drivers, then a solid red light to stop traffic and allow the pedestrian to safely cross.



The other types of pedestrian beacons flash an amber light to alert drivers and cyclists to yield to a pedestrian crossing the street.

The Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (R-R-F-B) provides two alternating, flashing amber lights when the pedestrian activates the beacon. Below is an example of an R-R-F-B implementation in Rockville Town Center and a close-up of the device with our Safe Routes to School mascot, Zeal.



More traditional pedestrian beacons have circular amber flashing lights, such as those shown below at Forest Glen Rd and Sligo Creek Trail.



Below are the locations where signals and beacons have been installed this year:

Traffic signals:

- Colesville Road & Lanark Way
- Veirs Mill Road & Matthew Henson Trail
- Georgia Avenue & May Street

Beacons:

- Willard Avenue and The Hills Plaza, HAWK
- Democracy Boulevard & Walter Johnson High School, HAWK
- Democracy Boulevard & Davis Library, HAWK
- Summit Avenue & Brookfield Drive, HAWK
- MacArthur Boulevard & Dunrobbin Drive, Pedestrian Beacon
- Dale Drive & Dartmouth Avenue, R-R-F-B
- West Cedar Lane & Cedarcrest Drive, R-R-F-B
- Georgia Avenue and Fenwick Lane, Ped Beacon
- Georgia Avenue & Veirs Mill Road, R-R-F-B
- Wisconsin Avenue & Avondale Street, R-R-F-B

Below are the locations where signals and beacons are scheduled to be installed in the coming year:

Traffic Signals:

- Wisteria Drive and Crystal Rock Drive
- Veirs Mills Road & Norris Drive
- Randolph Road & Bushey Drive
- Connecticut Avenue and Lenox Street
- Wisconsin Avenue & Middleton Lane
- Georgia Avenue & Price Avenue

Beacons:

- Bel Pre Road HAWKs (3 beacons to be installed in the corridor)
- Veirs Mill Road & Andrew Street, HAWK
- 6705 Rockledge Drive, HAWK
- Twinbrook Parkway & Twinbrook Recreation Center, HAWK
- Layhill Road & Greenery Lane, HAWK
- Muddy Branch Road & Muddy Branch Square Shopping Center, HAWK
- Snouffer School Road & Sweet Autumn Drive, HAWK
- East West Highway & Edgevale Street, R-R-F-B
- Philadelphia Avenue & Entrance to Takoma Park Library, R-R-F-B
- Grosvenor Lane & Fleming Avenue, R-R-F-B
- Wisconsin Avenue & Chase Avenue, R-R-F-B
- Spring Street & First Street, HAWK

### 2.3 MIDDLEBROOK ROAD SAFETY PROJECTS FOR SENECA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL.

The 2020 Vision Zero Action Plan called for implementing the Pedestrian Road Safety Audit recommendations for Middlebrook Road to increase pedestrian safety around the newly expanded Seneca Valley High School. M-C-D-O-T developed an interim road diet that removed the east-bound general travel lane adjacent to the high school and replaced it with a two-way cycle track. All lanes on the west-bound travel lanes were narrowed to reduce travel speeds and create buffer space between the roadway and the sidewalk. M-C-D-O-T also worked with the State Highway Administration to retime the traffic signals at Great Seneca Highway and Germantown Road to provide more time and protection for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road. On the Wisteria Drive side of the school, M-C-D-O-T will install a traffic signal at Wisteria Drive and Crystal Rock Drive. The project should be completed by the end of the year, weather permitting.

Below are pictures from November 2021 of the construction of bike lanes along east-bound Middlebrook Road and sidewalk additions to create space to get around a fire hydrant. The new on-street cycle facility allows more space for students on the shared use path.



#### 2.4 BETHESDA BIKEWAY AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES.

There are two facilities in the Bethesda Central Business District currently under construction, the Capital Crescent Surface Trail and Woodmont Avenue Phase One. Construction should be completed in a few months, weather permitting.

The Capital Crescent Surface Trail (CCST) is a separated two-way bike lane along the northern side of Bethesda Avenue between Woodmont Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue, MD 355. East of Wisconsin Avenue, the two-way separated bike lane will continue along the southern side of Willow Lane to 47th Street. A shared-use path is planned along the Elm Street Park's 47th Street frontage. Separated Bikeway & Pedestrian Safety Improvements will also be added along Woodmont Avenue from Norfolk Avenue south to Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355); Montgomery Lane/Avenue between Woodmont Avenue and Pearl Street. Additional bikeway and pedestrian improvements will be added along Norfolk Avenue and Cheltenham Drive between Woodmont Avenue and Tilbury Street as well as Pearl Street between East-West Highway and Seaford Road.

This project will also improve pedestrian safety, especially at the intersection of Woodmont Avenue and Bethesda Avenue. The cyclists will be separated from the pedestrians and the curbs will be extended to greatly reduce the time needed to cross either street and lower pedestrian exposure to motor vehicles.

### 3 ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS.

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#### 3.1 HOLIDAY ALCOHOL TASK FORCE.

During the Christmas and New Year's Day holiday periods in 2018 alone, there were more drunk-driving-related fatalities (285) across the US than during any other holiday period that year. Montgomery County Police and partner local and state police agencies combat drunk driving during the holiday season with the Holiday Alcohol Task Force. This group of dedicated officers patrol the streets in the evening and overnight hours to stop impaired drivers from hurting themselves and others. In the first two weeks, the task force arrested 68 people for driving under the influence and in a case last week were able to remove illegal guns from a stopped vehicle. The task force runs through January 9. Montgomery County Police perform high visibility enforcement against dangerous behaviors such as impaired driving, speeding, failing to yield right of way, seatbelt non-use, and distracted driving throughout the year. These enforcement efforts are backed by local, state, and federal education campaigns.

#### 3.2 SOCIALLY DISTANT BIKE RODEOS.

This fall, the M-C-D-O-T Safe Routes to Schools Program sponsored socially distanced education programs for M-C-P-S students. In September, small events, called bicycle rodeos, were held in parking lots around the County to teach kids how to safely ride a bike and securely wear a helmet. In October, M-C-D-O-T visited M-C-P-S meal distribution sites to hand out fun educational materials to students.



